

Claims

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A context-sensitive data announcing device comprising
- an ad hoc network interface configured to receive one or more announcements identifying one or more members of an ad hoc network;
- a database comprising information regarding one or more of the members;
- a processor configured to extract the information regarding the one or more members from the database using the identifying announcement; and
- an output for outputting the information regarding the one or more members.
- 10 2. The device of claim 1 further comprising
- a queue for storing the information regarding the one or more members.
3. The device of claim 2 wherein
- the queue couples the information regarding the one or more members to the output in the order the announcements were received.
4. The device of claim 2 wherein
- the information regarding an urgent member comprises an urgent designation; and

Sub the queue is configured to couple the information regarding the urgent member to the output before the information regarding at least some of the one or more members.

Sub 5. The device of claim 1 wherein

5 the processor is configured to extract the information regarding the one or more members that are proximate to the device.

6. The device of claim 5 wherein

the processor is configured to determine the proximity of the one or more members using a signal strength provided by the network interface.

Sub 10 7. The device of claim 5 wherein

the processor is configured to determine the proximity of a member using the number of hops among members the announcement associated with the member made before being received by the ad hoc network interface.

8. The device of claim 1 wherein

15 the ad hoc network interface uses one of radio frequency communications, optical communications, or wired communications.

Sub 9. The device of claim 1 wherein

5 ~~the output comprises one of a vibrating mechanism, an audio output, or a visual output.~~

10. ~~A method for an announcing member of an ad hoc network to announce the presence of one or more members of the ad hoc network, the method~~
5 ~~comprising~~

~~receiving an identifying announcement from one or more members of the ad hoc network;~~

~~accessing a database using the one or more identifying announcements to retrieve information regarding each of the one or more members of the ad~~
10 ~~hoc network from which an announcement was received; and~~

~~outputting the information.~~

11. ~~The method of claim 10 further comprising~~
~~queuing the identifying announcements.~~

12. ~~The method of claim 11 wherein queuing comprises~~
15 ~~queuing the identifying announcements in the order received.~~

13. ~~The method of claim 11 wherein queuing comprises~~
~~raising an urgent identifying announcement to a top of the queue.~~

14. The method of claim 10 further comprising

determining the proximity to the announcing member of each of the members of the ad hoc network from which the announcing member received an announcement; and

5 outputting comprises outputting only the identifying data for members of the ad hoc network that are proximate to the announcing member.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the announcements hop among members of the ad hoc network in order to reach the announcing member and wherein

determining the proximity comprises counting the hops an announcement made before reaching the announcing member.

16. The method of claim 14 further comprising

measuring the signal strength of each received identifying announcement; and wherein

determining the proximity comprises comparing the signal strength of each received identifying announcement to a threshold.

17. The method of claim 10 further comprising
building the database.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein building the database comprises
extracting new information from the one or more identifying announcements;
and
storing the new information in the database.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein building the database comprises
retrieving new information from a database external to the announcing
member; and
storing the new information in the database.

20. A system for identifying members of an ad hoc network, the system
comprising
communicators, associated with one or more source members and a display
member, for communicating announcements regarding the source
members between the source members and the display member;
a database comprising information regarding the source members;
a processor configured to access the database using the announcements to
produce accessed information; and

an output associated with a display member for outputting the accessed information.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein

the processor is configured to access the database for only those source members that are proximate to the display member.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein

an announcement passes through zero or more communicators as it travels from the source members to the display member;

the processor is configured to determine the proximity of a source member to the display member based on the number of communicators the announcement passed through between the source member and the display member.

23. The system of claim 21 further comprising

one or more signals for carrying the announcements between the source members and the display member;

a signal strength measurer associated with the display member, the signal strength measurer producing a signal strength for each signal received from a source member; and wherein

the processor is configured to determine the proximity of the source members to the display member using the respective signal strengths.

the output displays the accessed information for the source members in the order that the announcements were received from the respective source members.

5 25. The system of ~~claim~~ 20 wherein

the accessed information for each source member has an associated urgency, the urgency having an order; and

the output displays the accessed information for the source members in the order of urgency.

10 26. The system of claim 20 wherein

the processor is associated with the display member.

27. The system of claim 20 wherein

the database is associated with the display member.